

## **“Questions Every Christian Should Ask Themselves,” Part 4 - 1 Corinthians 8:10-13 – May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015**

- Today's teaching will be part four of a series I've titled, "Questions Every Christian Should Ask Themselves."
- One of the things that has become abundantly clear in our study through this chapter is Christians can hurt other Christians.
- More specifically as it relates to Christian's who have the liberty in Christ stumbling and even wounding those who don't have it.

- This because some there in the Corinthian church were exercising their liberty and eating certain meat offered to false gods.
- Apparently, there were other Christians who were weak in their conscience, and as such, we're stumbled when others did this.
- As we've seen here-to-fore it's our modern day equivalent of what's called Halal meat, which is sacrificed in the name of Allah.

- In the interest of time, I won't go into this as we have addressed Halal certified products in part two and part three of this series.
- Suffice it to say, Halal products are fast becoming an issue for Christians today, and we'll likely see it as such here in Hawaii.
- That said I would like to take the time to address a question that was brought up concerning the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15.

Acts 15:23–29 (NIV) — 23 With them they sent the following letter: The apostles and elders, your brothers, To the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia: Greetings. 24 We have heard that some went out from us without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said. 25 So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul—26 men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27 Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing. 28 It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: 29 You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things. Farewell.

- The question becomes, does this command to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, contradict Paul here in 1 Corinthians 8.
- The short answer is, no, for a number of reasons not the least of which is that the Jerusalem Council was for them at that time.
- In other words, it wasn't a decision that was applied to all the church all the time; rather, it was only for the church at that time.

One commentator said it best this way, "In Acts 15:29, the Jerusalem Council sent a letter commanding some churches to (among other things) abstain from things offered to idols. But Paul's discussion of the issue here does not contradict what the Jerusalem Council decided in Acts 15. Instead, it shows that the Council's decision was not intended to regulate all the church all the time; it was a temporary arrangement, meant to advance the cause of the gospel among the Jews of that day."

- Be that as it may, this brings us to our text today, which by way of introduction, is a little on the blunt side as we're about to see.
- True to form, the Apostle Paul is dealing with this serious matter, "head-on," so that there is no misunderstanding about this.
- The way he goes about this is to provide a template of sorts by way of asking ourselves questions as it relates to our freedoms.

- It's important to understand that these questions apply to situations that we as Christians may find ourselves in related to this.
- By way of a couple of examples, one is drinking a glass of wine in public, or, watching a particular television program or movie.
- Yes, we as Christians possess these freedoms, however, it is imperative that we ask ourselves specific questions before we do.

### **1. Am I tearing down or building up? (Verses 1-3)**

- Here Paul contrasts knowledge with love telling them that knowledge will puff up, whereas love on the other hand will build up.

### **2. Do I know the truth about false gods? (Verses 4-6)**

- Paul says concerning things offered to idols, we know an idol is nothing in the world, because we know the only one true God.

### **3. Will my freedom be a stumbling block? (Verses 7-9)**

- Paul is quick to warn that we must beware lest somehow this liberty of ours becomes a stumbling block to those who are weak.

### **4. Am I willing to abstain knowing its sin? (Verses 10-13)**

- v10 Paul says those who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will embolden those who are weak to also eat there as well.
- v11-12 He says when they do this they sin against the brethren and Christ, then asks should they perish for whom Christ died?
- v13 He then goes on to tell them if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

- While it's very clear we should never do anything to make our brother stumble, we should also be careful concerning legalism.
- Let me explain, when a Christian imposes their demands on others they tie the hands of liberty with the ropes of their legalism.
- It's interesting to note that this is exactly what happened in Galatians 2 when Paul had sharply rebuked Peter for this very thing.

Galatians 2:4,11-12 4 This matter arose because some false believers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. ... 11 When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. 12 For before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group.

- Here's the bottom line in closing, these two extremes on opposite sides of this table have the potential to be equally destructive.
- Namely, I can destroy my brother with my liberty, and legalism, such that both can become for me a sin against them and God.
- Would to God that I am made aware, by the Holy Spirit, when either liberty or legalism has taken up sinful residence in my life.